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its many and varied sketches will enhance the interest of the coming generation in what will soon be to them, in a larger sense than to us, "the storied past." R. H. S.

MARKHAM'S POEMS.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE, AND OTHER POEMS. By Edwin Markham. New York: Doubleday & McClure Company.

Every true citizen of the great American republic, who is also born or naturalized in the greater republic of letters, one not of equal rights but, apart from difference of divine endowment, of equal chances, longs to hear of the advent of some first-rate American singer—whose song shall be not echoes from over the sea, but the utterance of our life as it strives to fulfill itself in individual loveliness. It is hard to be critical. We are so desirous. Any firefly seems a star, any meteor a sun. Witness Mr. Stedman, easily our most meritorious American critic. What a contrast between him of the "Victorian Poets" and him again of the "Poets and Poetry of America?" In the former a Matthew Arnold is esteemed a minor, in the latter a Longfellow a major poet! To Mr. Stedman, by the way, is dedicated the little book of verse of which it is our lot to speak; and surely if he was "first to hail," as also "to caution," its author he did well both by him and us. At all events neither poet nor critic has cause for shame.

Our first word shall be one of gratitude—not passionate, for our deepest self has been scarcely stirred, but gratitude nevertheless. A choice diction, great sonorousness within the line unit of his blank verse, skillful and effective use of the noble sonnet form, perfect mastery of the old heroic stanza of Dryden's "Annus Mirabilis" and Gray's "Elegy," as in "The Wail of the Wandering Dead" and the far nobler "Song to the Divine Mother," and lastly a felicitous handling of the free dithyrambic rhythm and rhyme, as in "The Desire of Nations" and "A Lyric of the Dawn." All these things, greatly to the credit of Mr. Edwin Markham, it is a pleasure to note for the edification of some prospective reader, since any one who has already perused the

contents of "The Man with the Hoe, and Other Poems" needs not even to be reminded of these technical virtues of our poet.

Is it ungracious, on the other hand, to fault his blank verse for being purely cumulative in its power, metrical line upon line, no flow of period, consequently none of the larger eloquence which is found in some of his rhymed work? And this not only in the title poem, but in "A Look into the Gulf," "In Death Valley," "At the Meeting of Seven Valleys," and in "From the Hand of a Child." Does not fairness require the statement that a number of short pieces, unfortunately included in the volume, are mere poetic experiments of doubtful value even as such, the feminine rhymes occasionally leading what thought or feeling there is into predicaments which bring it to the brink of nonsense or dissipate it into ghosthood; such an echo as

Wail, wail, wail,
For the fleering world goes round,

partaking more of parody than of imitation; the free rhythm of such a piece as "The Man under the Stone," whatever its merits otherwise, having little that reminds us of the splendid success of Heine in his "Nordsee" or of Arnold in such a piece as "The Future."

We may deplore such poetic self-consciousness, learned of Wordsworth, as ("To the Cricket"),

Lead thou the starlit night with merry notes,
And I will *lead* the clamoring day with rhyme;

or ("To Louise Michel"),

And here now at the parting of the ways,
I lay a still hand lightly on your head.

Fancy the picture, and smile not! We may regret that he is disposed to indulge that self-pitying mood, vulgarly called the "blues," which no man is hypocrite enough to deny having experienced, but which no benevolent person desires by literary expression to transmit; for are there not too many poems on death and the dead which suggest that after-life may be as bad as, if not worse than, the "blues," from

internal causes or got by the contagion of unmanning sympathy, cause this present life to seem?

We may chuckle at the survival of the supposition that "only man is vile" the dear little ants knowing no competition, no caste system, no warfare ("Little Brothers of the Ground"); and, in sympathy with this the traditional treatment of nature, little effect being noticeable of botany or mythology, etc. Here surely Lanier set an example worth following!

What shall be said now in honest, sincere praise? "The Man with the Hoe," though an undeveloped creature, is mistaken for a degenerate, and all the other socialistic pleas are sincerely eloquent, dignified, impressive. Such sonnets as "The Elf Child," "The Goblin Laugh," "A Leaf from the Devil's Jest Book," "A Meeting," "The Last Furrow," "The Warp of Dreams," are each in its way excellent, the last two being peculiarly strong. These alone would not let our poet's name easily pass away with the somewhat hysterical vogue of "The Man with the Hoe," although it is grace of fancy rather than virile strength of imagination which impresses us in them. His "Lyric of the Dawn," though it recalls at times poems by greater poets, and becomes once almost dangerously didactical, is a charming piece of verse.

"The Desire of Nations" has in it things of great beauty from which we should like to quote freely, particularly that beautiful identification of the Christ with Balder, Apollo, Osiris, and the Ideal Socialist.

And lastly his "Song to the Divine Mother" is sustained and eloquent as well as technically remarkable, in which Gray's "Elegy" stanza has a prophetic swiftness, a passionate fullness of sweep, though the pessimism of certain stanzas is only the artistic elaboration of the "blues."

In conclusion let us say that the volume well deserves to obtain the attention which the title poem by the chance of newspaper notoriety may bespeak for it, and some of us heretics, who are quite sure that "The Recessional" is not Kipling's greatest, would like to whisper in the dear public's

ear—if it will not betray us to the inquisitors of the press—that neither also is “The Man with the Hoe” Mr. Edwin Markham’s masterpiece. W. N. GUTHRIE.

MACKAIL’S “LIFE OF MORRIS.”

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM MORRIS. By J. W. Mackail. 2 vols. Longmans, Green, & Co. 1899.

We believe that even William Morris himself, fastidious as he was about books, would say that this biography devoted to him is a worthy specimen both of the art of the biographer and of that of the bookmaker. It is one of the finest products of the Chiswick Press, and is well illustrated, especially with drawings by Mr. E. H. New, of the famous houses with which Morris is associated. As for Mr. Mackail’s work, it is what one would expect from his pen; and if Sir Edward Burne-Jones, who urged its inception, were alive, he would surely say that Morris could hardly have had a more sympathetic biographer. That Morris of all men needs such a biographer is apparent. He was a poet, a painter, an architect, a designer, a practical dyer, weaver, and what not, a specialist in Icelandic lore, a printer, an illuminator of books, a socialist, a manufacturer—and finally a hot-headed, impulsive man, not to be included under any formula whatsoever. Now, to present such a subject properly a biographer must either be equally many sided or else possess abundance of imagination and sympathy as well as judgment. We think that Mr. Mackail possesses these requisites—perhaps his classical training has given them to him, although at first blush one would say that Morris was the last man with whom a classicist would sympathize.

Be this as it may, Mr. Mackail has sympathized with Morris in every phase of his multiform activity, and, what is more, he has written so as to make his reader sympathize. For this is not a biography of the modern kind—to wit, a bundle of letters strung on a biographical string. It makes use of letters and diaries—and in one or two places might perhaps have dispensed with them—but on the whole it is an ordered and lucid account of Morris’s life as Mr. Mackail